



General Assembly

January Session, 2023

Raised Bill No. 6629

LCO No. 3905



Referred to Committee on HUMAN SERVICES

Introduced by:
(HS)

AN ACT CONCERNING TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17b-112 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

3 (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer a temporary
4 family assistance program under which cash assistance shall be
5 provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary
6 assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the
7 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of
8 1996. The Commissioner of Social Services may operate portions of the
9 temporary family assistance program as a solely state-funded
10 program, separate from the federal temporary assistance for needy
11 families program, if the commissioner determines that doing so will
12 enable the state to avoid fiscal penalties under the temporary
13 assistance for needy families program. Families receiving assistance
14 under the solely state-funded portion of the temporary family
15 assistance program shall be subject to the same conditions of eligibility
16 as those receiving assistance under the federal temporary assistance for

17 needy families program. Under the temporary family assistance
18 program, benefits shall be provided to a family for not longer than
19 [twenty-one] sixty months, except as provided in [subsections (b) and
20 (c)] subsection (b) of this section. [For the purpose of calculating said
21 twenty-one-month time limit, months of assistance received on and
22 after January 1, 1996, pursuant to time limits under the aid to families
23 with dependent children program, shall be included.] For purposes of
24 this section, "family" means one or more individuals who apply for or
25 receive assistance together under the temporary family assistance
26 program. If the commissioner determines that federal law allows
27 individuals not otherwise in an eligible covered group for the
28 temporary family assistance program to become covered, such family
29 may also, at the discretion of the commissioner, be composed of (1) a
30 pregnant woman, or (2) a parent, both parents or other caretaker
31 relative and at least one child who is under the age of eighteen, or who
32 is under the age of nineteen and a full-time student in a secondary
33 school or its equivalent. A caretaker relative shall be related to the
34 child or children by blood, marriage or adoption or shall be the legal
35 guardian of such a child or pursuing legal proceedings necessary to
36 achieve guardianship. If the commissioner elects to allow state
37 eligibility consistent with any change in federal law, the commissioner
38 may administratively transfer any qualifying family cases under the
39 cash assistance portion of the state-administered general assistance
40 program to the temporary family assistance program without regard
41 to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures. If such families become
42 an ineligible coverage group under the federal law, the commissioner
43 shall administratively transfer such families back to the cash assistance
44 portion of the state-administered general assistance program without
45 regard to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures to the degree that
46 such families are eligible for the state program. For the purpose of
47 calculating said sixty-month time limit:

48 (A) Months of assistance received on and after January 1, 1996,
49 pursuant to time limits under the aid to families with dependent
50 children program, shall be included;

51 (B) A month shall count toward the limit if the family receives
52 assistance for any day of the month, provided any months of
53 temporary family assistance received during the public health
54 emergency declared by Governor Ned Lamont related to the COVID-
55 19 pandemic shall not be included; and

56 (C) A month in which a family receives temporary assistance for
57 needy families benefits that are issued from a jurisdiction other than
58 Connecticut shall count toward the limit.

59 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall exempt a family from
60 such time-limited benefits for circumstances including, but not limited
61 to: (1) A family with a needy caretaker relative who is incapacitated or
62 of an advanced age, as defined by the commissioner, if there is no
63 other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (2) a family with
64 a needy caretaker relative who is needed in the home because of the
65 incapacity of another member of the household, if there is no other
66 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (3) a family with a
67 caretaker relative who is not legally responsible for the dependent
68 children in the household if such relative's needs are not considered in
69 calculating the amount of the benefit and there is no other nonexempt
70 caretaker relative in the household; (4) a family with a caretaker
71 relative caring for a child who is under one year of age if there is no
72 other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (5) a family with
73 a pregnant or postpartum caretaker relative if a physician has
74 indicated that such relative is unable to work and there is no other
75 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (6) a family with a
76 caretaker relative determined by the commissioner to be unemployable
77 and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household;
78 [and] (7) minor parents attending and satisfactorily completing high
79 school or high school equivalency programs; and (8) a family that has
80 encountered circumstances preventing employment, including, but not
81 limited to, (A) domestic violence, as defined in Section 402(a)(7)(B),
82 P.L. 104-193, or physical harm to such family's children; or (B) other
83 circumstances beyond such family's control.

84 [(c) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits may petition the
 85 Commissioner of Social Services for six-month extensions of such
 86 benefits. The commissioner shall grant not more than two extensions to
 87 such family who has made a good faith effort to comply with the
 88 requirements of the program and despite such effort has a total family
 89 income at a level below the payment standard, or has encountered
 90 circumstances preventing employment including, but not limited to:
 91 (1) Domestic violence or physical harm to such family's children; or (2)
 92 other circumstances beyond such family's control. The commissioner
 93 shall disregard ninety dollars of earned income in determining
 94 applicable family income. The commissioner may grant a subsequent
 95 six-month extension if each adult in the family meets one or more of
 96 the following criteria: (A) The adult is precluded from engaging in
 97 employment activities due to domestic violence or another reason
 98 beyond the adult's control; (B) the adult has two or more substantiated
 99 barriers to employment including, but not limited to, the lack of
 100 available child care, substance abuse or addiction, severe mental or
 101 physical health problems, one or more severe learning disabilities,
 102 domestic violence or a child who has a serious physical or behavioral
 103 health problem; (C) the adult is working thirty-five or more hours per
 104 week, is earning at least the minimum wage and continues to earn less
 105 than the family's temporary family assistance payment standard; or
 106 (D) the adult is employed and works less than thirty-five hours per
 107 week due to (i) a documented medical impairment that limits the
 108 adult's hours of employment, provided the adult works the maximum
 109 number of hours that the medical condition permits, or (ii) the need to
 110 care for a disabled member of the adult's household, provided the
 111 adult works the maximum number of hours the adult's caregiving
 112 responsibilities permit. Families receiving temporary family assistance
 113 shall be notified by the department of the right to petition for such
 114 extensions. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the
 115 commissioner shall not provide benefits under the state's temporary
 116 family assistance program to a family that is subject to the twenty-one
 117 month benefit limit and has received benefits beginning on or after
 118 October 1, 1996, if such benefits result in that family's receiving more

119 than sixty months of time-limited benefits unless that family
120 experiences domestic violence, as defined in Section 402(a)(7)(B), P.L.
121 104-193. For the purpose of calculating said sixty-month limit: (I) A
122 month shall count toward the limit if the family receives assistance for
123 any day of the month, provided any months of temporary family
124 assistance received during the public health emergency declared by
125 Governor Ned Lamont related to the COVID-19 pandemic shall not be
126 included, and (II) a month in which a family receives temporary
127 assistance for needy families benefits that are issued from a jurisdiction
128 other than Connecticut shall count toward the limit.]

129 [(d)] (c) Under said program, no family shall be eligible that has
130 total gross earnings exceeding the federal poverty level, however, in
131 the calculation of the benefit amount for eligible families and
132 previously eligible families that become ineligible temporarily because
133 of receipt of workers' compensation benefits by a family member who
134 subsequently returns to work immediately after the period of receipt of
135 such benefits, earned income shall be disregarded up to the federal
136 poverty level. [Except when determining eligibility for a six-month
137 extension of benefits pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, the] For
138 a family that would lose eligibility due to new employment with
139 earnings exceeding the federal poverty level, the commissioner shall
140 gradually reduce benefits over a period of ninety days prior to the date
141 on which the family is no longer eligible for benefits under the
142 program. The commissioner shall disregard ninety dollars of earned
143 income in determining applicable family income. The commissioner
144 shall disregard the first fifty dollars per month of income attributable
145 to current child support that a family receives in determining
146 eligibility and benefit levels for temporary family assistance. Any
147 current child support in excess of fifty dollars per month collected by
148 the department on behalf of an eligible child shall be considered in
149 determining eligibility but shall not be considered when calculating
150 benefits and shall be taken as reimbursement for assistance paid under
151 this section, except that when the current child support collected
152 exceeds the family's monthly award of temporary family assistance

153 benefits plus fifty dollars, the current child support shall be paid to the
154 family and shall be considered when calculating benefits.

155 [(e)] (d) A family receiving assistance under said program shall
156 cooperate with child support enforcement, under title IV-D of the
157 Social Security Act. A family shall be ineligible for benefits for failure
158 to cooperate with child support enforcement.

159 [(f)] (e) A family leaving assistance at the end of [(1) said twenty-
160 one- month time limit, including a family with income above the
161 payment standard, or (2)] the sixty-month limit, including a family
162 with income above the payment standard, shall have an interview for
163 the purpose of being informed of services that may continue to be
164 available to such family, including employment services available
165 through the Labor Department. Such interview shall include (A) a
166 determination of benefits available to the family provided by the
167 Department of Social Services; and (B) a determination of whether
168 such family is eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance or
169 Medicaid. Information and referrals shall be made to such a family for
170 services and benefits including, but not limited to, the earned income
171 tax credit, rental subsidies emergency housing, employment services
172 and energy assistance.

173 [(g)] (f) Notwithstanding section 17b-104, commencing on July 1,
174 2023, the Commissioner of Social Services shall provide an annual cost-
175 of-living adjustment in temporary family assistance benefits equal to
176 the most recent percentage increase in the consumer price index for
177 urban consumers whenever funds appropriated for temporary family
178 assistance lapse at the close of any fiscal year and such adjustment has
179 not otherwise been included in the budget for the assistance program,
180 provided the increase would not create a budget deficiency in
181 succeeding years. The commissioner shall provide a prorated benefit
182 increase from such available lapsed funds in any fiscal year when such
183 funds are not sufficient to cover a cost-of-living adjustment in
184 accordance with this subsection.

185 ~~[(h)]~~ (g) An applicant or recipient of temporary family assistance
186 who is adversely affected by a decision of the Commissioner of Social
187 Services may request and shall be provided a hearing in accordance
188 with section 17b-60.

189 Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 17b-112b of the general statutes is
190 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
191 *1, 2023*):

192 (a) An applicant or recipient who is a past or present victim of
193 domestic violence or at risk of further domestic violence, pursuant to
194 subsection (c) of section 17b-112a, shall, for good cause: (1) Be excused
195 from failing to participate in a work activity; or (2) be exempted from
196 child support enforcement requirements pursuant to subsection ~~[(e)]~~
197 (d) of section 17b-112, as amended by this act. Such an applicant or
198 recipient may, for good cause, be granted an [extension of cash
199 assistance beyond twenty-one months] exemption from the sixty-
200 month time limit for temporary family assistance, pursuant to section
201 17b-112, as amended by this act, provided the domestic violence
202 experienced is of sufficient magnitude to reasonably render the
203 individual unable to obtain or maintain employment.

204 Sec. 3. Section 17b-112e of the general statutes is repealed and the
205 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

206 (a) The Department of Social Services shall provide safety net
207 services for certain families identified as having significant barriers to
208 employment and families who are at risk of losing benefits under the
209 temporary family assistance program or no longer receiving program
210 benefits. To be eligible for safety net services, such families shall: (1)
211 Have been identified as having significant barriers to employment
212 during the initial assessment by the department's eligibility worker or
213 during the first twelve months of employment services by an
214 employment services case manager; (2) have made a good faith effort
215 to seek and maintain employment but have not been able to do so or
216 be at risk of failing to complete the employment services program; or

217 (3) have exhausted their eligibility for temporary family assistance
 218 program benefits. [; or (4) not be eligible for six-month extensions of
 219 temporary family assistance benefits due to: (A) The receipt of two
 220 sanctions from the department during the first twenty months of the
 221 twenty-one-month time limit of said temporary family assistance
 222 program; or (B) the determination by the department that such a
 223 family has not made a good faith effort to seek and maintain
 224 employment.]

225 (b) Said safety net shall consist of services provided through the
 226 existing community service delivery network with additional
 227 resources provided by the Department of Social Services. Services shall
 228 be provided in-kind or through vendor or voucher payment. Services
 229 may include the following: (1) Food, shelter, clothing and employment
 230 assistance; (2) eviction prevention; (3) an in-depth family needs
 231 assessment; (4) intensive case management that includes visits to the
 232 family's home; (5) continuous monitoring for child abuse or neglect;
 233 and (6) for families at risk of losing benefits under the temporary
 234 family assistance program, individual performance contracts
 235 administered by the Labor Department that require job training, job
 236 searching, volunteer work, participation in parenting programs or
 237 counseling or any other requirements deemed necessary by the Labor
 238 Commissioner.

239 [(c) Families successfully meeting the program requirements
 240 established by the individual performance contracts in subdivision (6)
 241 of subsection (b) of this section prior to the end of the twenty-one-
 242 month time limit shall be considered to have made a good faith effort
 243 to comply with the requirements of the program for the purposes of
 244 qualifying for a six-month extension, provided they have made a good
 245 faith effort to comply with the individual performance contract or have
 246 not incurred a sanction subsequent to completing the individual
 247 performance contract.]

248 [(d)] (c) The Commissioner of Social Services shall implement
 249 policies and procedures necessary for the purposes of this section

250 while in the process of adopting such policies and procedures in
 251 regulation form, provided the commissioner [prints] posts notice of
 252 intention to adopt the regulations [in the Connecticut Law Journal
 253 within twenty days of] on the eRegulations System and the
 254 department's Internet web site not later than twenty days after
 255 implementing such policies and procedures. Policies and procedures
 256 implemented pursuant to this subsection shall be valid until the time
 257 final regulations are effective.

258 Sec. 4. Subsection (d) of section 17b-112g of the general statutes is
 259 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
 260 *1, 2023*):

261 (d) A family receiving diversion assistance shall be ineligible to
 262 receive monthly temporary family assistance payments for a period of
 263 three months from the date of application for temporary family
 264 assistance, except that such family shall be eligible to receive
 265 temporary family assistance payments within such period if the
 266 Commissioner of Social Services, or the commissioner's designee, in
 267 the commissioner's sole discretion, determines that the family has
 268 experienced undue hardship. A family that is subject to the [twenty-
 269 one-month] sixty-month benefit limit under temporary family
 270 assistance shall have diversion assistance count as three months
 271 toward such limit. [Nothing in this section shall prohibit a family
 272 receiving diversion assistance that later qualifies for temporary family
 273 assistance from qualifying for a six-month extension available to
 274 recipients of temporary family assistance who did not receive
 275 diversion assistance.]

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	17b-112
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	17b-112b(a)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	17b-112e
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	17b-112g(d)

HS

Joint Favorable C/R

APP